

### Remarks

Claims 6, 8-15, 17, and 19-20 remain in the application. Claims 1-5, 7, 16, and 18 are hereby canceled without prejudice. Claims 6, and 17 are hereby amended. No new matter has been added.

### Allowable Subject Matter

#### Claim 6 and dependents

Claim 16 was objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claim 16 depends from claim 7 which in turn depends from independent claim 6.

Applicants have amended independent claim 6 to incorporate the limitations of claims 7 and 16. Claim 6 as amended now recites as follows.

6. A method of cluster-wide management performed per node, the method comprising:  
 checking an up/down status input received from a previous node;  
 checking a degraded status input received from the previous node, wherein the degraded status input comprises multiple degradation levels with one such level comprising a "bad" state indicating that the previous node appears down;  
 checking a heartbeat input received from the previous node; and  
**comparing the degraded status with a node removal threshold for potential removal of the previous node from the cluster if the degraded status shows degradation above the threshold.**

(Emphasis added.)

As amended, claim 6 now includes the limitations of original claims 6, 7, and 16. Hence, applicants respectfully submit that claim 6 is now in form for allowance.

Claims 8-15 depend from amended claim 6. As such, applicants respectfully submit that dependent claims 8-15 are also now allowable.

Claim 17 and dependents

In addition, applicants have amended independent claim 17 so as to incorporate the allowable subject matter from original claim 16. Claim 17 as amended now recites as follows.

17. A system for of a high-availability cluster, the system comprising:  
a general inter-node communication network that is configured to carry signals including heartbeat signals from the nodes; and  
a separate inter-node communication channel for communicating node status signals including at least an up/down status signal and a degraded status signal,  
wherein **the degraded status signal is compared with a node removal threshold for potential removal of a node from the cluster if the degraded status signal shows degradation above the threshold.**

(Emphasis added.)

Similar to amended claim 6, claim 17 as amended now recites that “the degraded status signal is compared with a node removal threshold for potential removal of a node from the cluster if the degraded status signal shows degradation above the threshold”. As such, applicants respectfully submit that claim 17 is now also allowable.

Claims 19 and 20 depend from amended claim 17. Hence, applicants respectfully submit that dependent claims 19-20 are also now allowable.

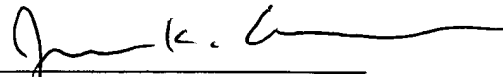
Conclusion

For the above-discussed reasons, applicants believe that the pending claims are now in allowable form. Favorable action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ken Gary Pomaranski et al.

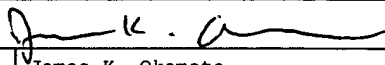
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